M Cowper
1509/1094

THE

FOX, a Fryar;

AN

Alluſion to MANKIND.

More particularly, and moſt Religiouſly Addreſs'd to his Eminency *CHARLES*, Cardinal ALBERONI.

By *Timothy Harris*, Gent.

Nil dictum, quod non dictum prius.

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15
59
JUIL

TO THE READER.

THE Weakneſs of ſome Writers, is their Privilege; and they ſeem protected from Cenſure, becauſe they are below it; as Dwarfs are excus'd from Quarrels, by their Want of Stature: The Generous forbear them in Pity, and the Proud in Scorn. Upon theſe Hopes, the Author of this ſmall Tract concludes he is ſafe from the mighty Criticks, who, he preſumes ſtoop not, but to ſhoot over his Head, while each of them damns his Author, and ſo ſtarts up a Poet; as

each Bravo, that kills his Man in the Field, is for his Valour dubb'd a Knight.

Occaſional Addreſſes, he has not the Vanity to think longer liv'd, than the Monthly Flowers, which look gay for a little Seaſon; and pleaſe but while they are freſh, and keep their Scent: More he cannot wiſh, than that they ſhou'd be ſmelt to, e're they are thrown away: And if you credit him not in this, he muſt for ever curſe that Fate, which Poets have in common with all other Lyars, not to be believed by others, when they ſpeak Truth, tho' the Wretches believe themſelves when they Lye.

THE

THE Fox, a Fryar, &c.

A

Quarius ebb'd, and *Piſces* caught i'th' (*Wire*,
The Ram leap'd in, which made my (Muſe to ſmile:
Well pleas'd, I gave the Wanton a (Green-Gown,
And like a Fairy, trip'd it up and down.
By Chance I paſs'd by a fair Chryſtal Flood,
Whoſe neareſt Neighbour was an o'ergrown Wood

There

There little bubbling Fountains nois'd in Springing,
And Nightingales on ev'ry Bough were Singing.
The Fields, the Flowers, the Fruit ſo freely budding,
Heedleſs I walk'd, and ſtumbl'd on a ſudden
Upon a Fox's Hole: —*Reynard*, ſaid I,
Why art thou baniſh'd from Society?
This ſolitary, melancholly Cave,
Looks like a deſp'rate Dungeon, or a Grave:
Thy Sentence was ſevere, — What! No Reprieve!
Muſt thou lie thus, and be intomb'd alive?
'Tis true ——
The Goodwives ſay, thou'rt treacherous and ſullen,
A greedy Dog too, for killing all their Pullen:
The Shepherds too, ſuch loud Complaints do bring,
As make each Corner of the Downs to ring:
Such bloody Slaughter of their harmleſs Sheep,
Like a ſly Curr, thou mak'ſt, when they'r aſleep;
Without Diſtinction, killing all the Lambs
That bleat, and ſuckle with their tender Dams.—

Reynard, to me, his gentle Paw did reach,
And in ſmooth Language thus began to preach:
Many blind Souls who cannot read their *Pſalter*,
Are too to bold, and buſie with the Altar.
Let no Man put his Finger in the Fire,
For I, by my Profeſſion, am a Fryar.
Our Order, 'bove all Earthly Power, was rang'd
Equal with Angels---- but thoſe Times are chang'd;
A diſmal Cloud hath ſhaded all our Mirth,
For now we're call'd the Locuſts of the Earth
By Schiſmaticks, who having loſt their Way,
In a wild Labrynth of Error ſtray.
It was a Golden Age, when we did handle
Th' affrighted World with our Bell, Book, and
(Candle:
Lords of the World! Men's Conſciences to boot!
And made the greateſt Kings to kiſs our Foot:
We then were Emperors of all Mens Treaſures;
My Brother Wolf, and I, far'd both like *Cæſars!*
Our Bellies ſtrutting, we cou'd nothing lack,
The full cram'd Diſhes made our Tables crack!

Gam-

Gammons of Bacon! Brawn! And what was chief,
The King of Meats, a tall Sir Loin of Beef!
Fat Ven'ſon-Paſties ſmoaking!—(And 'tis no Fable)
Swans in their Broth, came ſwimming to the Table;
Partridges, Pidgeon, Plover, and the Hen,
With all their Broods! --- (Would it were ſo agen!)
My Sides were wond'rous plump, and in good (plight,
And I had then no Cauſe to range by Night;
Feaſted with Delicates beyond all Meaſure,
Our Golden Path was ſtrew'd with Eaſe and Plea- (ſure!
The Highway Huckſter, he delights in Pillage,
The Gypſy ſwaggers in a Country Village:
The Beggar under ev'ry Buſh doth feaſt;
But of all Lives, the Fryar's Life's the beſt!
The World, in pure Devotion, was ſo holy,
That we fed well, and laughed at their Folly;
The Nuns, and we too, all agreed ſo well,
That ſtill we pardon'd whatſoe'er befell;
We put the fair Side outward, what was foul
Was cloſly hidden underneath our Cowl.

None

None in the Pulpit e'er became a Lye,
With Face more bold and confident, than I;
Such melting Words, as made the Women weep,
And ſlily made me in their Souls to creep:
The Men from Home, and dreaming of no Harm,
I kiſs'd their Wives; and kept their Places warm:
I led the Fools in ſuch a ſtupid Blindneſs,
At their Return, they thank'd me for my Kind-
neſs!
The World was faſt aſleep, and did not mind me,
Where e'er I came, I left my Spawn behind me:
Like Bulls reſerv'd for Breed, from our fair Abbies,
We fill'd all Countries with our luſty Babbies:
Hence in their Mouths this Proverb all Men gather,
'Tis a wiſe Child that knoweth his own Father!

But now, alas! I greatly grieve and mourn,
And beg and pray, 'till Fate ſhall give a Turn;
My Bones I lie upon this Rocky Hill,
And Day by Day I faſt againſt my Will:

For being thus diſſolv'd, I ſtill condole,
And have e'er ſince been hid in this dark Hole:
In this poor Hermitage my Vows I pay,
And in Devotion waſte the tedious Day;
Shunning all Company by Heav'ns Direction,
I keep my ſelf untainted from Infection;
In Meditation on my own Thoughts feeding,
Leaſt they ſhou'd ſpoil my Manners, and my Breed-
(ing:
I likewiſe think, and volve within my Mind,
Where I at Night ſome pleaſant Bit may find;
Self-Preſervation is a general Rule,
Taught and maintain'd in Nature's chiefeſt School.
My Occupation, which ſome Thiev'ry call,
I learnt of Man, the greateſt Thief of all!
By him I was inſtructed to indict;
Man is my Copy, what he writes I write:
Look on my Book, I'm ſure I do not miſs,
Compare them well, my Letters are like his.
'Tis true, with Ducks and Geeſe I am at War,
Yet Man in Cruelty exceeds me far:

For

For one Offence of mine, Number his Ten;
I prey on Lambs, but he doth prey on Men.
Upon a Pig ſometimes I place my Mind,
Whole Nations he devours of his own Kind!
To ſatisfie fierce Hunger, 'tis moſt juſt;
Man plays the wanton Cannibal for Luſt!
A Rabbit, a Hare, tho' ſmall, we prize 'um,
Theſe, *Alexanders* Worlds will not ſuffice 'um:
Such petty Thieves as I, are ſtill diſprais'd,
While mighty *Tories* are to Honour rais'd.
We make the Woods our dreadful Habitations,
They ſtear the Helm of Kingdoms and of Nations,
Like *Cæſars* they are plac'd on Fortune's Brow,
But we are forc'd to ſhift at any how,
The World is caught with Toys, thing's priz'd we (ſee,
Not as they are, but as they ſeem to be:
Of our diſtinguiſh'd Honour it wou'd bar us,
Becauſe our Chambers are not hung with *Arras*:
Truth ſtandeth on a Rock, and 'tis good *Latin*;
A Fool's a Fool, tho' cover'd o'er with Sattin.

Debaſe not then my worthy Pedigree,
For my Right Line vies with the greateſt He;
Tho' I am forc'd to live in humble Cott,
My Anceſtors were Beaſts of Princely Note;
And tho' I am by no Man now befriended,
Yet I'm from Kings and Emperors deſcended!
With *Hannibal* I was in great Requeſt,
And always lodg'd in that brave General's Breaſt:
'Twas not his Sword that drove the *Romans* Home
Totally routed, then beſieged *Rome*;
It was my Counſel gave the fatal Blow,
When *Italy* with Blood did overflow;
And had my Policy found Approbation,
Rome had not been the Empreſs of each Nation.
My Grandſire *Herod*, whoſe grave Steps I follow,
Thought how the great Thieves do the little ſwallow;
From his Example all Men will confeſs,
The great Ones are Supplanters of the leſs:
For all contend, from Mattock to the Crown,
And ſtill the ſtrongeſt throw the Weakeſt down.

From *Cain* my Lineal Pedigree I draw,
Who firſt proclaim'd the Statute of Club-Law;
'Twas when the Infant World was newly blown,
When Piſtols, Swords, and Canons were not known;
Nor that *Italian* Trick, that lays Men dead,
Lull'd faſt aſleep, before they go to Bed!
So ſoon did *Fratricide* Man's Mind invade,
That now 'tis grown a cheap and common Trade.
My Couſin *Nimrod* learnt his Skill from me,
The firſt that hunted after Soveraignty:
He kept about him a fleet Pack of Beagles,
Who had the Tallons, and the Wings of Eagles;
But when his foul-mouth'd Currs did roar and (thunder,
Oh! How amaz'd was *Coridon* with Wonder!
To build a Tower, he long time was brewing,
That he might ſee what all the Gods were doing;
Peeping into (altho' it was forbidden)
Their wiſe Decrees, and Counſels that were hidden:
And that which made it *Luciferian* Treaſon,
He thought to do, tho' void of Senſe or Reaſon:

Thus

Thus the Foundation of that Place was laid,
Which into Ruin all Mankind betray'd.
When this Attempt did fail, and cou'd not be,
He then unkennels all his Hounds on me:
His Huntſman's Fury blew the Bugle-horn,
So I (fore-warn'd, fore-arm'd) at Dawn of Morn
Fled (as I Cauſe had) both thro' Thick and Thin,
Thro' Woods and Brakes to ſave my threatn'd Skin;
Fear gave me Wings, it was no time to dally,
I ſcal'd the Rocks, and flew thro' ev'ry Valley;
At laſt I found this poor, this homely Bower,
A Caſtle ſtronger than his mighty Tower.

Neceſſity my nimble Pate refining,
I taught the World the Art of Undermining,
Which they have practis'd ſince in all their Wars,
Blowing up Towns, that ſhine like Blazing Stars!
A Fig for your *Granado*, and *Redoubt*;
For tho' beſieg'd with Thouſands round about;
Within this Paliſado ſafe am I,
And all your Squibs and Crackers do defie!

My

My Brother, *Mahomet*, esteem'd me dear,
I taught the Dove to whisper in his Ear:
By that fine Cheat, the vulgar Minds beguiling,
For all the *Alchoran* was of my compiling:
With strong Delusion, and devout Pretences,
I fram'd that Pamphlet, pleasing to the Senses;
To charm Man's Appetite, was my sole Aim,
What is not so, I utterly disclaim:
Foisted by Fools (for that was none of mine)
When he forbad Mankind the Use of Wine.
That such brave Liquor shou'd be in Disgrace!
For this all Poets curse him to his Face.
They call him Sot, and Fool, and senseless Wid-
(geon,
No Poet ever was of his Religion!
'Twas Sack that gave Don *John*, that brave Gal-
(lanto,
The glorious Day i'th' Battle of *Lepanto!*
Or had the *Dutch* been arm'd with furious Brandy,
The State of *Venice* had not lost their Candy.

Wise

Wiſe Privy-Counſellors, whoſe Wits are running,
In all their deep Deſigns practiſe my Cunning;
Their greateſt Safety in my Counſel lying,
To keep their Necks whole, and their Heads from flying.
Stateſmen attend, and crow'd my Cave each Minute,
Each Project fails, if *Reynard* is not in it.
Fryars and Monks, all the Grand Popes decoys,
Learn ſtill of me, t' amuze the World with Toys;
And many ſubtle Snares I Hourly ſet,
To bring blind Ideots head-long to my Net.
This to effect, I chiefly mix and ſeaſon,
Charms with my Wine, which robs them of their Reaſon.
And that they may not ſmell my bitter Potion,
I colour all my Liquor with Devotion.
I lend my Hand to low ones that are down;
And raiſe by Fraud, the Prieſt to th' Tripple Crown:
Unto my painted Lure, all Mortals bend,
Old *Simon Magus* was my truſty Friend:

Achitophel, whoſe Policy was rare,
Griev'd me, to ſee him Sailing in the Air.
To *Matchiavel*, and Him, I am ally'd,
Both my Great Uncles, by the ſurer Side:
I were ungrateful, ſhou'd I not commend her,
My good Old Grannam, the grave Witch of *Endor*;
She taught me Magick, to foretel good Hap,
When a fat Kid ſhou'd fall into my Lap:
And by Aſtrology learnt me to diſcover
When I ſhou'd plant my Lips upon a Plover.
The Sun in *Capricorn*, the Moon decreaſing,
I told each Calf his Minute of deceaſing:
My Skill in Palmiſtry wou'd much delight ye,
From *Venus* Mountain, to the *Linea Vitæ*.
By ſecret Lines I did the Fates diſplay,
Of ev'ry Gooſe that came into my Way.
In all Arithmetick I was well read,
And cou'd divide the Shoulder from the Head;
A Capon, or a Cock, if I cou'd win him,
I quickly did reduce into a Minnim:

The feather'd Fowl that fly, I did Trappan 'um,
All this and more I learnt of my good Grannum.

Fair *Cleopatra*, tho' the *Roman* kis'd her,
Tony's dear Minion was my Mother's Sister:
She was his Mate, he was her Turtle-Dove;
Shrin'd in one Tomb! Fond Fools to die for Love!

Queen *Jezabell*, she was my Mother dear,
Whom cruel Dogs did all in pieces tear:
I suck'd her Milk; a tender Mother she,
For which the Dogs still lick'd their Lips at me.
There are but two Names in the World bear Rule,
Two mighty Families, The Knave and Fool;
Of these, the Major-part, in Power and Place,
But all the Knaves spring from the Fox's Race.
The Mountebanks, they daily do invoke us;
And Juglers learn their Tricks of *Hocus-pocus*:
The crafty Lawyers, nimblest of the Three,
Lay by their *Littleton*, to study me:
Their Clients Purses they do plow and harrow,
And gnaw the Bone, when they have suck'd the (Marrow.

When

When I was young, and did an Infant Write,
In Books of Heraldry I took delight:
Our Predeceſſors Fame, from *Adam's* Prime,
I cou'd reduce unto the preſent time:
I, and the Serpent, joined in Commiſſion,
Gave *Eve* that Apple cauſed Man's Perdition:
Our Coat of Arms is rich, and wond'rous good,
Three Lambs new ſlain in a fair Field of Blood:
Some of our Anceſtors wanting their Fleeces,
Did bear a ragged Coat, all torn in pieces;
An honourable Badge, worn as a Jem,
Won in the Wars, between the Hounds and them:
Upon our Creſt, a Duck, ſtruggling and ſtriving,
Snatch'd on a ſudden, as ſhe was a diving.
Theſe things are laid aſide, and out of date;
The Leaf is changed in the Book of Fate!
'Twas all my own, that came within my Eying;
I could have ta'en the ſwifteſt Swallow flying.
'Twas nought to clamber up the talleſt Cliff;
But now my Joints and Sinews are grown ſtiff:

My Grinders not ſo ſharp to gnaw a Bone,
And all my vaulting, tumbling Tricks are gone!
And this my greateſt Grief, my Friends abuſe me,
Thieves of my own Profeſſion, they accuſe me,
The Gypſy, and Pick-pocket in the Stocks,
Taylors and Millers, all do curſe the Fox;
Envy ſwells like a Toad ready to burſt,
But ſtill the Fox fares beſt, when moſt accurſt.
Two-handed Lawyers, rob both Rich and Poor,
Wiping their Mouths, they lay it at my door:
The Juſtice and his Clerk, who for a Fee,
Turn Juſtice Topſy-turvy, rail at me:
The Uſurer, whoſe Soul is Hell-fed Bacon,
Roars out of Hell, for ſtealing his fat Capon;
Widows and Children, his wide Throat doth (ſwallow
Yet calls me Thief, as if I had no fellow;
His own he ſees not, but my Cheats he'll tell ye,
Who hath whole Towns and Cities, in his Belly;
When he hath chew'd a Pariſh, and the People,
At the next Morſel he devours the Steeple!

So if you'll put all People to the Teſt,
Among the Thieves, I ſhall be found the leaſt.
The little Chryſtal ſprings do rob their Donor;
The Envious robs his Neighbour of his Honour!
The Sun doth rob the Sea, in Showers of Rain;
The thirſty Earth doth rob the Sun again:
The Rivers rob the Brooks, which gently fall
In ſilent Streams, and then the Sea robs all!

When *Cupid* he doth throw his poiſon'd Dart,
The Lover then doth ſteal his Miſtreſs Heart!
Not Lyons only that for Prey do lie,
Nor Whales, that ſwallow mighty Shoals of Fry;
They live by Rapine; Brother robs his Brother,
And all ſubſiſt by plund'ring one another.

Theft's the World prop, Dame Nature's chiefeſt Friend;
Baniſh all Thieves, the World will quickly end!
I loved all my Brethren wond'rous well,
Who did in active Feats of Hand excell:

I thought

I thought thoſe Thieves, who in the open Sun
Bid Travellers ſtand, t'have cauſe themſelves to run,
For they were Fools; I wiſely ſhun'd the Light,
My Stratagems had Safety in the Night;
At Night when Dogs do ſleep, and not a Mouſe
That licks the Cream, did move in all the Houſe:
The Chanticleer indeed wou'd oft be blowing,
Whom I as oft was forc'd to charm from crowing;
His Voice ſo ſhrill, 'twas heard thro' all the Village,
And did prevent my well-laid Plots for Pillage:
His crowing was to *Peter* a Good-morrow,
When his Repentance melted into Sorrow!
It was not ſo with me, I was afraid,
Leſt he ſhould wake the Miſtreſs, and her Maid;
Whoſe thund'ring Tongues would gather in a Cluſter,
The whole Neighbourhood, as to a gen'ral Muſter;
Raiſing great Tumults, high and mighty Stirs,
With Guns and Piſtols, and damn'd bawling Currs;
Who wou'd not ſpare me, if they once did wind me,
But ſoon compel me to leave my Skin behind me!

Thus

Thus the brisk Game ſtood fair before my Eyes;
To make the Cock ſure was my Maſter-Prize:
At his vain babbling I was ſore offended,
Griping his Throat, his Tale was quickly ended;
My Work to finiſh, without debating,
I ſtop'd his Whiſtle, and his Tongue for prating:
Upon the Ground poor Chanticleer lay ſpringing,
His Melody quite mar'd for ever ſinging;
And to accompany his Funeral,
Some cackling Hens were made likewiſe to fall.

To weigh theſe things, it makes me melancholy,
And wou'd redeem my wanton Folly.
That all is out of frame, all will confeſs,
Another's Error makes not mine the leſs:
I'm weary of the Courſe which I have run,
And do repent the Miſchiefs I have done.
Let Man begin, whom we poor Animals do call,
The Microcoſme, and Quinteſſence of all!

Fram'd

Fram'd by th'Almighty! A Copy of the Three!
And perfect Figure of the Trinity!
The loweſt Angel, and the talleſt Beaſt;
A goodly Thing, in all his Titles dreſs'd!
Let this Thing, Man! who doth in Honour ſwim,
Reform the firſt, and we will follow him:
I'll leave my Thieving-Trade, and be his Debtor,
If his Examples teach me to be better.

The Reflection, by way of Moral.

The crafty Fox doth ſolemnly proteſt,
Man unredeem'd is worſe than any Beaſt;
Than Wolf, Dog, Lyon, Tyger more uncivil,
Without a Saviour an apoſtate Devil!

FINIS.